

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	A-00	CA-00	CCO-00
	CG-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00
	PERC-00	PDI-00	DS-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	CAC-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	VCIE-00	NRC-00
	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	OCS-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	PM-00
	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	USSS-00	NCTC-00	ASDS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000470

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/5/2019

TAGS: PREL PTER LO HU PHUM

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA AGREES TO RESETTLE THREE GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

CLASSIFIED BY: Simon R. Hankinson, Consul.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a November 4 meeting with Special Envoy for Guantanamo Closure Dan Fried, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico agreed to accept three Guantanamo detainees for resettlement in Slovakia. After further discussion of details and logistics with Foreign Minister Lajcak and Interior Minister Kalinak, it appears likely the conclusion of the entire process, i.e. actual arrival of detainees in Slovakia, could occur before January 20, ¶2010. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Special Envoy Fried came to Bratislava November 4 at the invitation of the Slovaks to discuss possible Slovak acceptance of Guantanamo detainees. Fried and the Charge met with Prime Minister Fico, Foreign Minister Lajcak, and Interior Minister Kalinak at the Prime Minister's office. Fico unambiguously confirmed his approval of Slovakia accepting three detainees, commenting that taking only one would be a mere "token" while three would be a "substantive" statement. He was confident that the decision was right politically; given Slovakia's criticism of Guantanamo in the past, helping President Obama close it was now Slovakia's moral duty.

¶3. (C) Fried explained that the USG would be able to provide modest assistance with resettlement costs for the former detainees. Fico replied that -- at this point -- he believed taking money would send the wrong political message domestically, but he reserved the right to change his mind in the future. Fico also asked that the U.S. avoid any public announcement or press play until later in the process, with which Fried concurred. Fico and Fried also agreed that prior to the public announcement the U.S. would engage with Slovak opposition leader Dzurinda to discourage any use of the issue in the 2010 Slovak election campaign. Having given the green light, Fico then turned the meeting over to his Foreign and Interior Ministers to work out the details.

¶4. (C) In the follow-on discussion, which U.S. Consul and S/GC officer Michael Williams joined, there were no Slovaks present other than the two ministers. Lajcak said that the decision is still close-hold and no civil servants or other professional staff had yet been brought in (although Kalinak confirmed that Slovak intelligence chief Magla is on board and supportive of the plan).

¶5. (C) The Slovaks were aware that there had been some detainees from the former Soviet Union and suggested that they might be more easily integrated in Slovakia, but Fried explained that the remaining available detainees were either Uighurs or North

African or Syrian Arabs. The Foreign Minister preferred not to take Uighurs, seeking to avoid problems with China; interestingly, he asked Fried for his opinion on what those problems might be, indicating that this fear is not rooted in specific anticipated retaliation of any kind. Kalinak preferred to take Uighurs, because they would present fewer security issues. Fried outlined potential advantages of the Uighurs (e.g., lower security risk). But in the end, Lajcak asked that the files sent to Slovakia not include any Uighurs. Both ministers thought it would be easier to work with three different nationalities/ethnicities rather than three from the same country. (Note: Slovakia has a minuscule Muslim population -- mostly students -- in the low hundreds.)

¶16. (C) Fried explained the process in general: within two weeks, the U.S. will send the Slovaks files on selected detainees to consider; the Slovaks will review the files and then, if they wish, visit Guantanamo to interview candidates; they select their three; the U.S. Administration will notify the U.S. Congress; Diplomatic Notes will be negotiated and exchanged regarding re-settlement conditions; and, finally, the detainees are flown via U.S. mil-air to Slovakia. Fried added that additional questions following review of files and/or interviews could be handled through appropriate liaison channels. The two ministers had no objections to this process. Kalinak said he would want to bring in the Director of his Migration Office and experts from the Slovak Intelligence Service (SIS) and security service, and that they would want to visit Guantanamo (as they also did recently before re-settling 10 Cuban refugees in 2008).

It was agreed that the USG would send files on 10 possible candidates, not including Uighurs, to the Slovaks as soon as possible, through the Embassy [Note: the files were provided and transmitted to the Slovak MFA and MOI on November 6]. Fried added that the US would eventually provide Schengen-releasable versions of the detainee files to the Slovaks to allow them to comply with EU arrangements on this issue.

¶17. (C) In response to Fried's offer of help with the media, Lajcak said that they might ask, but not yet. He admitted that everything the Fico Administration would do from now until the national parliamentary elections in June was going to be "political," and said they would decide later how to release and present the decision on accepting detainees. He also requested that Fried not talk to opposition politicians or anyone else in Slovakia at this stage. Kalinak added that the GOS had experienced practically no negative reaction to the Cuban resettlement or their temporary hosting of around 100 Palestinians (currently on their way from Iraq to the U.S. as refugees). Neither anticipated this being a domestic political problem if handled properly.

¶18. (C) Kalinak thought that the Slovaks could have their part (review of files, visit to Guantanamo, final selection of detainees, re-settlement logistical arrangements) done in time for a decision on which detainees to accept by late December. Both Kalinak and Lajcak -- and Fico, in the earlier meeting -- understood the importance of the U.S. transferring the detainees by January 20.

¶19. (C) Embassy Comment: Fico told Fried he was motivated by principle in deciding to accept detainees; having harshly criticized the detainee policies of the Bush Administration, he felt a responsibility to help President Obama close the facility. Perhaps. But the Slovaks also recognize they are accumulating chits that they may want to use at some point. And they may hope to out-shine Hungary, which has publicly offered to take one detainee (and with whom Lajcak noted they need help addressing Hungarian efforts to engage the U.S. Congress in passing an anti-Slovak-language-law resolution). But whatever their motivation, taking three detainees for resettlement helps move the U.S. closer to its goal of early closure of Guantanamo. End Comment.